4/16/74

Dear Dave,

Because of the stunning nature of the personal tragedy in which you are so suddenly caught up, writing you at all makes me feel awkward. And because I know how much longer and harder each day much be for you now, I am reluctant to add the few moments it takes to read a letter to any of your days.

I cannot accomplish my intended purpose by merely saying "thanks." This is too inadequate, for what I feel, for what you started to do for me and most of all for the manner in which you did it. It was particularly impressive to me for two reasons, one of which had concerned me. We had never had a chance to discuss this and while I had seen the results of your work, I had never seen you working before.

I do not think there is any worry I had that you did not address and to the degree now possible reach a satisfactory understanding. Without our having discussed them you anticipated each of these worries. That in itself is a remarkable perception. And with all that now must press so constantly upon you, you had thought it all through so clearly and then put it at once forcefully and so diplomatically that there was no offense in it.

So I am attempting to express more than the appreciation I do feel. At the same time I am trying to convey an enormous respect.

Most of all was I troubled by the possibility of irresponsibility. You never mentioned the word, didn't have to, and should have persuaded the most unwilling that any such approach is the assurance of disaster.

If one can address a business meeting in terms of a performance, it was the greatest!

The one substantive discussion Freed and I had about any of this I mentioned when we were all together. I anticipate no conflict over content but if there is one he did agree to let it be handled by the junior of the lawyers, the one with the best grasp of the overall, including fact. Conflict in the sense of Ray's interest.

After you left we had a drink and talked about other things.

It was social and did not touch on this project at all.

Because he seemed so impressed with your promotion on Executive Action, which he described as the one good thing that happened to it, let me tell you what you may find an amusing and interesting story from my past that because of your involvements with movies may have more intrest to you.

Once when I was at the New York Newspaper Guild Club before World War II with a friend who worked for the Guild, he introduced me to a friend of his who he said was promoting a movie he was sure I would want to help. It was Confessions of a Nazi Spy. I knew the late Senator Gerald Nye fairly well and persuaded him to sponsor a private showing in the Interdepartmental Auditorium for government bigwigs. It went well and made legitimate news. Years later, when we were about in the war, this same Nye held different views and conducted an "investigation" of the movie industry in which all the headlines were that the movies were getting us into the war. All the America First crowd really believe this, and with anti-Semitic overtones. As the horrible example Nye siezed upon Confessions of a Nazi Spy, while Harry Warner was on the witness stand. None of the movie people remembered Nye's own sponsorship of that movie! So, I phoned Frank LaFalce, who was with Warner, reminded him of this story, and the next day was the dramatic end to that propagandistic "investigation." (And as I got nothing from the successful promotion, nobody of those very rich who had so much at stake ever said "thanks.")

Many thanks, Dave. And hope.

Sincerely,

Explanation: he is handling cancer crusade publicity asa freebee. His wife just had a brain tumor operation where it was malignant and may be too late.